



The Green Architect

By Blair Seibert, AIA, LEED AP

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Top 10 Green Products of 2007 by Blair Seibert, AIA, LEED AP, GPR

For the sixth year, the editors of the GreenSpec Directory and Environmental Building News have selected the Top-10 Green Building Products of 2007. Both organizations provide objective research and analysis and vet out manufacturers who greenwash. Many in the building industry look to them as the “Consumer Reports” of our industry’s products. One AIA membership benefit is a discount to BuildingGreen.com which is the developer of the GreenSpec Directory and a great resource for all things green.

As those who have received substitution requests, there are many characteristics to building products. Green building products are no different with the added level of environmental and human impact. This year’s list will provide you with a list of the products “green” aspects per BuildingGreen.com’s analysis. To see a list of ALL the products visit:

<http://www.buildinggreen.com/press/topten2007/top-10-list.cfm#suneeye>

1. FreeForm a Forest Stewardship Council(FSC) Certified

Particleboard. The product is produced in Klamath Falls, Oregon with a urea-formaldehyde-free melamine binder. In the past it was difficult if not impossible to find a wood product with BOTH FSC and no added urea-formaldehyde components.

It is green because it consists of post-consumer recycled content, is made with FSC wood and releases minimal pollutants. For more information see:

<http://www.buildinggreen.com/auth/productDetail.cfm?ProductID=3652>

2. High-Performance Alpen Fiberglass Windows. This Boulder Colorado company makes the highest performing glazing units in the world. Each 1-3/8” thick unit is custom built . With three layers of low-e film, the maximum R value is R-20 at the center of the glass.

This products green aspects are: that it reduces heating and cooling loads and that it is exceptionally durable and low-maintenance. For more information see: <http://www.buildinggreen.com/auth/productDetail.cfm?ProductID=3653>

3. Miliken’s 180 Walls wallcovering. Did you know that wallcoverings often encapsulate moisture and hide mold? This 100% pre-consumer, recycled polyester product actually allows the wall to breath. It meets other green rating systems standards and is less expensive than most fabric wallcoverings. This product is manufactured in LaGrange, Georgia.

It is green because it consists of pre-consumer recycled content, provides and alternative to hazardous components and releases minimal pollutants. For more information see:

<http://www.buildinggreen.com/auth/productDetail.cfm?ProductID=3219>

4. Bosch’s 800 Series SHE98M Evolution Dishwasher uses just 190kWh per year, 73% higher than

the Energy Star requirement. In addition to conserving energy its noise output is just 42dB. 100% of Bosch's appliances meet Energy Star standards. They are the only manufacturer with that can claim such.

These machines are green because they conserve energy and **manage loads**. For more information see: <http://www.buildinggreen.com/auth/productDetail.cfm?ProductID=435>

5. Skyline Design's Greenplay Children's Furniture includes tables, shelves, seating and playspaces made with recycled plastic, sunflower hulls and wheat straw. All paints and coatings are low or no VOC. All attachments are made mechanically eliminating the need for adhesives. The company also has a take-back policy at the end of the furniture's life.

This furniture is green because it uses agricultural, post-consumer and post-industrial waste. It releases minimal pollutants and is made with rapidly renewable materials. All products are produced in Chicago, Illinois. For more information see: <http://www.buildinggreen.com/auth/productDetail.cfm?ProductID=3579>

6. Caroma's New Cube3 Ultra Urinal. This urinal requires just one pint of water per flush. It is activated by a liquid sensing flush mechanism that prevents accidental flushes. I think this will be widely accepted by plumbers and building owners. Unlike the waterless urinals, traditional cleaning products may be used and there are no cartridges to throw away. This product is made in China.

This product is green because it conserves water. For more information see: <http://www.buildinggreen.com/auth/productDetail.cfm?ProductID=3639>

7. LifeGuard™ is a line of lead-free, low smoke, zero-halogen electrical cables. These would be used where the additional cost of the product would justify its high-reliability and lack of toxic off-gasing (i.e. data centers and hospitals).

The product is green because it reduces impacts from construction or demolition and releases minimal pollutants. For more information see: <http://www.buildinggreen.com/auth/productDetail.cfm?ProductID=3454>

8. EnOcean's wireless controls provide control for lighting and other building automation systems through radio-frequency communication. Requiring only one-tenth the power of most controllers, its unusual energy-harvesting system enables the controllers to operate without batteries. The product was designed and is manufactured in Germany.

This product is green because the equipment conserves energy, it improves light quality and the system reduces the need for materials. For more information see: <http://www.buildinggreen.com/auth/productDetail.cfm?ProductID=3542>

9. Solmetric's SunEye is a hand-held electronic device for green architects, builders and solar installers. It measures solar shading and calculates solar access. Its special lensed digital camera captures an image of the site. By uploading that information onto a computer, alternative designs, solar panel installation locations and even solar rebate applications can be generated. According to the manufacturer in Bolinas, California the product is so popular that there is a four week back log of orders.

This product is green because it helps support renewable energy system use and **uses fuel cells**? For more information see:

<http://www.buildinggreen.com/auth/productDetail.cfm?ProductID=3410>

10. LED downlights from LED Lighting Fixtures, Inc. provides a lamp that offers up to 50,000 hours of life, three to five times that of fluorescent without the mercury content. The LEDs low level of light has been its downfall in the past. With the LR6 however, just 11 watts of energy provides 650 lumens of light, for an efficacy of 60 lumens per watt. With 42 LEDs per fixture the lamp provides a color rendering index (CRI) of 92, much better than most compact fluorescent lamps. In addition this product is designed to fit into standard 6" recessed cans. This product is manufactured in China.

This product is green because it provides an alternative to products with hazardous components and it conserves energy. For more information see:

<http://www.buildinggreen.com/auth/productDetail.cfm?ProductID=3552>

These new products excite me. As we make energy efficiency easier, more aesthetically pleasing and affordable they will become mainstream.

Blair Seibert, AIA, LEED AP is a member of the San Fernando Valley and Los Angeles AIA. If you have any questions or comments about this article or would like to be notified of local "green building" events, contact her at: 310-422-2417 or blair@verdearchitects.com.